U.S. Trade with Sub-Saharan Africa, January-March 2011

In the first quarter of 2011, U.S. total trade (exports plus imports) with Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) increased by 20 percent to nearly reach $23 billion, compared to the same period in 2010. U.S. exports to SSA increased by 30 percent to reach $4.9 billion (consistently with the 18 percent growth of total U.S. exports to the world). This January-March quarter, the top five African destinations for U.S. products were South Africa, Nigeria, Angola, Ghana, and Ethiopia. Exports to South Africa increased by 97 percent (due to a sharp increase in U.S. exports of precious stones and motor vehicles), to Nigeria by 6 percent, to Ghana by 31 percent (due to an increase in U.S. exports of machinery and motor vehicles), and to Ethiopia by 52 percent (due to a growth in U.S. aircraft exports). Exports to Angola decreased by 4 percent (resulting from a decline of U.S. exports of vehicles). U.S. exports of fuel and oil, machinery, precious stones[1] and metals (a high 2,698 percent increase) continue to grow. However, SSA's share in the overall U.S. export markets represents a low 1.41 percent (a slim increase from 1.27 percent the first quarter of 2010).

This first 2011 quarter, U.S. imports from SSA increased by 17 percent (consistently with the 19 percent increase of U.S. imports from the world) to reach $18 billion. This increase was mostly due to a 16 percent increase in U.S. mineral fuel and oil imports and a 48 percent increase precious stones and metals imports from SSA. This growth closely parallels the large increase in total U.S. crude oil imports from virtually all trading partners (to include non-AGOA eligible countries). In contrast, U.S. imports of cocoa continue to decrease (-18 percent), mostly due to recent political instability in Côte d'Ivoire. This quarter, U.S. imports from SSA originated, for the most part, in Nigeria, Angola, South Africa, Gabon, and Chad. Total U.S. imports from Nigeria increased by 27 percent, from South Africa by 30 percent (driven by increases in diamond imports), from Gabon by 247 percent (led by a massive increase of U.S. imports of crude oil), and from Chad by 10 percent. U.S. imports from Angola dropped by 10.5 percent following a decrease in U.S. imports of Angolan crude oil and diamonds.

In the first three months of 2011, AGOA imports totaled $11.8 billion, 12 percent more than in the same period in 2010, mainly due to a 10 percent increase in petroleum product imports.[2] Petroleum products continued to account for the largest portion of AGOA imports with a 91 percent share of overall AGOA imports. *With these fuel products excluded, AGOA imports – almost exclusively dominated by raw materials - were $1 billion, increasing by 23 percent as compared to the first three months of 2010.* U.S. imports of AGOA minerals and metals increased by 42 percent and imports of chemical and related products by 7 percent. Imports of textiles and apparel (mostly from Lesotho and Kenya) grew by 23 percent. Finally, the top five AGOA beneficiary countries were Nigeria, Angola, South Africa, Chad, and the Republic of Congo. Other leading AGOA beneficiaries included Gabon, Ghana, Lesotho, Kenya, and Cameroon.

---

[1] The recent recovery in the global economic outlook appears to be reinforcing positive growth in consumer demand of precious stones, which in turn is driving a rebound in rough diamond prices.

[2] Note that AGOA imports are imports for consumption, while all other import figures are general imports. Imports for consumption include only those goods as they enter the U.S. economy for consumption. General imports include all goods as they cross the U.S. border, including those destined for bonded warehouses or foreign trade zones.

Prepared by: Saliha J. Loucif
Sr. International Trade Specialist
U.S. Department of Commerce
International Trade Administration
Market Access & Compliance/Office of Africa